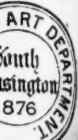


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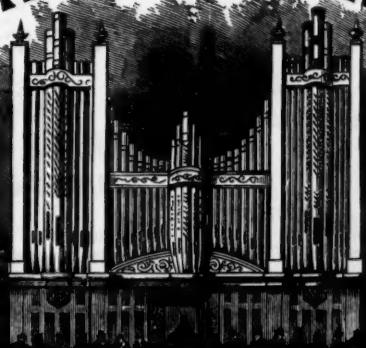
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A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW

Devoted to the interests of Worship Music in the
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Our Competitions.

THE prize of two guineas for the best set of variations on the tune *Adeste Fideles* has been awarded to

Mr. ERNEST H. SMITH, F.R.C.O.,
87, Vandyke Street,
Liverpool.

The composition will appear in *The Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries* for September.

The Next Competition.

We offer a prize of two guineas for the best composition for a Sunday School Anniversary or Chor Festival. The following are the conditions :

1. MSS. must be sent to the Editor at 20, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone, on or before August 31st.
2. Each MS. must be marked with a *nom de plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope, containing the name and address of the composer.
3. Unsuccessful MSS. will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.
4. We reserve the right to withhold the prize

should we consider there is no MS. of sufficient merit or suitability.

5. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

The Nonconformist Chor Union Festival may be regarded as a success. The singing in the Chor Competition was, taking it all round, superior to that heard in any former competition. All the competing choirs were much more on a level than hitherto. They showed good training and earnest work. The concert passed off well in spite of one or two slips, the worst of which was the failure of the great bulk of the trebles to start in the Handel chorus, "Let their celestial concerts all unite." Rather more spirit and vigour here and there and more promptness in attack would have been an improvement. But remembering first what material many of our choirs are composed of, and second that, owing to the wide area over which the choirs are spread, hundreds of the singers had never been rehearsed at all by either the conductor or any of his assistants, it was creditable to the singers and their respective choirmasters that the singing went with so much precision. The Union is progressing, and we confidently anticipate that ere long the choral work will be even more satisfactory. The attendance of both chor and audience was considerably larger than was anticipated, the Jubilee not having the injurious effect that was expected.

We observe that the recent chor competition at the N.C.U. Festival at the Crystal Palace has resulted in a newspaper correspondence at Northampton. Some one—probably a person interested in one of the defeated choirs—questions the adjudicator's decision. But as so capable a judge as Dr. Turpin adjudicated, the general public will not doubt the correctness of the verdict.

Mr. T. R. Croger, the esteemed Hon. Sec. of the Nonconformist Chor Union, sets an example as an employer of labour which, with great advantage, might be followed. He has a large number of young women in his employment who usually leave off at 6 p.m. Recently Mr. Croger sent a grand pianoforte into the work room, and intimated that if any of them cared to remain for music any evening till 8 o'clock they were at liberty to do so. Further, Mr. Croger has provided a library for his employées, and also gives the necessary guarantee for them to get books from a public library. Such thoughtfulness for those engaged in daily labour is rare.

Dr. G. C. Martin, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, and Professor Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, were included in the list of Jubilee Knights. Professor Bridge, as an excellent all-round musician, well deserved the honour, and Dr. Martin, as composer of the *Te Deum* sung at the Jubilee service, is entitled to recognition. Would not the Jubilee have been a most favour.

able opportunity for recognising the widespread beneficial influence the Tonic Sol-Fa movement has had on the musical life of the nation during the Queen's reign? Musicians generally would have been glad to see Mr. J. Spencer Curwen's name amongst those to receive a knighthood. Her Majesty has made a number of musical knights during her reign, but we doubt if any of them have done more for music than Mr. Curwen, if we consider him as the representative of Sol-Fa. Is it too late to confer an honour which is certainly well deserved and which would give much satisfaction to musical men of all schools?

Prizes were offered by the Newcastle, Gateshead, and District Band of Hope Union for various musical compositions. Mr. Arthur Berridge (the composer of several of our popular anthems) won the £3 prize for the best Band of Hope Festival Glee or Part Song. Mr. Herbert West won the £2 prize for the best two songs, and Mr. Stratton Swann the £1 prize—the second prize in this class. No awards were made for action songs.

The Nineteenth Annual Report and Circular Letter of the Cambridgeshire Baptist Association has been sent to us. The Circular Letter is on "Music in the Sanctuary," and is written by the Rev. H. Jenner. He takes a broad and sensible view of the subject and gives some very useful hints and suggestions.

All editorial communications should be sent to Mr. Minshall, at 20, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone. The JOURNAL and all our Musical publications will continue to be published at 44, Fleet Street.

Passing Notes.

I MAY as well confess it; about this time of the year one feels sure of sympathy, I have just returned from a delightful holiday, and I am not in the mood for writing. You remember how Thackeray sighed in the same circumstances? He was enjoying his "teetotum happiness" almost to the toppling-over extent, when a wretched letter was handed to him at Amsterdam. Before he opened the letter he had read COME BACK as clearly as if it had been painted on the wall. It was all over. The spell was broken. The sprightly little holiday fairy that had frisked and gambolled through eight days of sunshine, gave a parting look and whisked away and vanished. One more day and Thackeray was at the old desk.

So it is with the humble individual who now writes. And what can you expect of a man who has been to see Brussels for the first time?—whose eyes still blink at the thought of Rubens' glorious canvases? Only two days ago I sat and listened to the organ in Antwerp Cathedral. I heard nothing to rave about

from the instrument—indeed I thought a great deal more of the case than of the tone; but what a magnificent building the Cathedral is! Not so large by a long way as St. Paul's; but how very much more imposing, more finely "furnished"! That one picture of the Descent from the Cross—how it exhibits Rubens' wonderful genius! To be sure, one does not take very kindly to the idea of Rubens' handsome wives (he had two—not both at once, of course) figuring in the characters of the two Marys. But that is a mere detail; the main effect is grand and impressive. Thackeray, I am sorry to find, did not like this very fine picture; but no matter: Thackeray is not the Pope. What Thackeray did like was the chimes from the Cathedral tower. And so he might. You dress, eat, walk, and talk to yourself to their music. Their nearly inaudible jingle accompanies you all day; you read the sentences of the paper to their rhythm. The great novelist tried uncouthly to imitate the tune to the ladies of his party at breakfast, and they told him it was the Shadow Dance from *Dinorah*. As to that, I don't know, for I have long since forgotten my *Dinorah*. But one thing I do know: I am here at the desk's dead wood, hundreds of miles away from the ancient Flemish town, and I still hear the chimes from that Cathedral tower. But more of this and I shall have the editor's sentence of excommunication from these pages.

Well, then, let us speak of something musical. In Brussels, being all alone without an Englishman to talk to, I felt I must have something English to read, and so I bought the current number of the *Athenæum*. And what should I find there but a fresh thrashing out by Mr. Edward Cutler, Q.C., of the old, old question whether the so-called Handel organ at Whitchurch is Handel's organ at all. You know that the rector and churchwardens of Whitchurch have recently applied to the public for help to repair the church and rebuild the organ—the instrument on which, as they put it, "the immortal Handel, during the years 1718-21, habitually played." Of course this statement is made on the authority of the brass plate on the instrument. But the plate is no evidence at all, for it was fixed as recently as 1847 on the ground of a mere tradition. Mr. W. H. Cummings has shown that Handel could not have visited Canons until he went there to produce *Esther* in 1720. Of course Handel was organist to the Duke of Chandos at Canons; and the difficulty about the Whitchurch organ is this, that it was certainly not the instrument used in the Duke's private chapel. That chapel was pulled down in 1714, when the organ was sold to Trinity Church, Gosport, for £342. Mr. Cutler admits this, but contends that Handel could not have lived so near without frequently playing on the organ at Whitchurch. With that contention one may readily agree, the more so that the Duke of Chandos certainly rebuilt and beautified the church of Whitchurch. But it is clear that if Handel played only occasionally on the Whitchurch organ, while he played habitually on the organ in the Duke's private chapel, the latter and not the former instrument is the one which is entitled to be called "Handel's organ." Of course Mr. Cutler has good reason, from his own point



of view, for pleading in favour of the Whitchurch tradition. He is—or was—organist of the church, and it was his uncle, the Rev. Julius Plumer, who had the much-discussed plate affixed to the instrument. Counsel, we know, can be retained for either side of a case—even an organ case.

Some hitherto unpublished letters of Sir Henry Bishop have just come into my hands from which many interesting extracts might be made. Sir Henry was evidently a firm believer in what we now call "program" music. As everybody knows, he furnished a musical setting for Burns' *Jolly Beggars*; and in one letter I find him telling the gentleman who had ordered the setting, that in the introduction he has "made an attempt to paint (musically) the situation of the parties concerned at the time of the commencement of the poem." He goes on to describe in some detail how he has done this. The time of the evening, for example, he has expressed "by the eight notes which begin the introduction, signifying a bell striking eight o'clock." The idea of the tinker's trade is brought out by "the heavy monotonous hammering upon one note." And so on. But the man who was to pay for the score had no liking for this sort of thing, and he frankly said so. Thereupon Bishop proceeds to expound his views upon the general question of program music. It appears to him that "characteristic" music, where it only attempts an imitation of such particulars in nature as are imitated in all overtures and symphonies (without the audience being informed of it) is not less likely to please because the intention of the composer is unknown to the hearers. Witness, for instance, the finale to one of Haydn's symphonies, "in which that immortal master gives an imitation of a dancing bear, etc., which imitation was only known to a few of Haydn's friends. Yet the music always delighted every hearer." So pleads Sir Henry in extenuation. But then, if the listeners are not to recognise what is your "program," why have a program at all? What is the use of imitating the dancing bear if nobody finds a suggestion of the animal's gambols in the music? Moreover, if the hearer does discover an imitation he is as likely as not to discover something which you never intended. How can I tell that Sir Henry Bishop's eight notes are not meant to bring to my notice the strokes of the blacksmith on his anvil, or the tolling of the Curfew bell? You may go a certain length in this direction but only a certain length. Beethoven and Handel may imitate the cuckoo, and Mendelssohn may faithfully represent the bray of the donkey. But what can Haydn do with "the long and sinuous worm"?

In one of these letters of which I have been speaking, Sir Henry Bishop makes an energetic protest against the exclusive use of the treble and bass clefs. "I know of no substantial reason," says he, "why the tenor part in vocal music should ever be written but in its proper clef; and it is some degree of disgrace to the musical knowledge of this country that it should so seldom be so written. However, if it must be, the bass clef is at least preferable to the treble clef for the transposition, as the notes at all events retain their

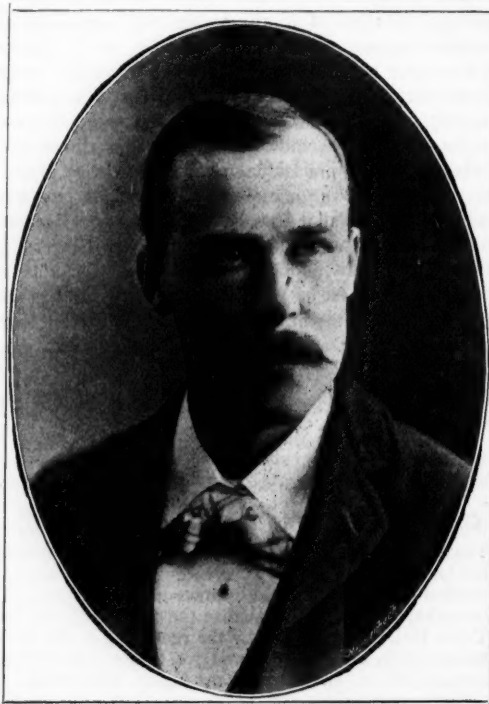
position, whereas if in the treble clef they cause a continual appearance of false harmonies, etc." Fancy the amateur tenors of these days being asked to sing from their own "proper clef"! Sir Henry was writing in 1817, when the now familiar metronome was as new to the world as the motor-car is to-day. Hence the following: "The precise degree of time to every piece," says Bishop, "is marked by references to the metronome, a small machine, the invention of a German named Maelzel, which has lately and very deservedly become extremely popular in London (as it has been for some time past in Paris, Vienna, etc.), and has the patronage of all the first composers of the present time on the Continent and here." What should we do now without the invention of the "German called Maelzel"? Yet is the metronome not altogether an unmixed blessing.

J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

OXFORD NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.

THE enterprise and public spirit of the united choirs of the Oxford Free Churches was recently justified and rewarded by a complete and unprecedented success. It was a happy thought to signalise the opening of the new Town Hall for public use by the rendering of Handel's masterpiece, the *Messiah*, and we doubt if, all things considered, it has ever been better performed in Oxford; certainly it has never been more thoroughly enjoyed by an Oxford audience. The performance reflected great credit on the various Nonconformist choirs of the city, and was striking evidence of the enormous advance which has been made in music. The soloists were Miss Carrie Siviter, Miss Louise Watson, Mr. Woodward, and Mr. Sunman. Miss Siviter soon established herself as first favourite with the audience. She has a pleasing voice, and an artistic and intelligent style. The Nativity recitatives were given in good dramatic manner, and the air, "Rejoice greatly," with which they close, was sung with appropriate jubilation. Her success was even greater in "Come unto Me" and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," the latter being one of the successes of the evening. The contralto, Miss Louise Watson, also sang with some measure of success. Mr. Woodward displayed considerable vocal ability in the tenor solos, and rendered "Comfort ye" and "Every Valley" with good effect. The Passion recitatives lacked somewhat of imaginative pathos, but in "Thou shalt dash them" Mr. Woodward sang very effectively. Mr. Sunman's chief successes were in the recitative, "Thus saith the Lord," with the airs, "But who may abide" and "The trumpet shall sound." The chorus sang with great success throughout, and the parts were fairly balanced. They had evidently been well trained; the attack was good, and the light and shade fairly successful. Mr. Kerry presided at the organ with great ability, and did his best to make up for the want of an orchestra. To mention only one instance: the accompaniment to "For, behold," and "The people that walked," was very successful. Mr. Phillips conducted with decided beat and great watchfulness, and much of the success was evidently due to his careful training. No account of the concert would be complete without a word as to the audience. It crowded every part, many being unable to find seats.

The financial result of the concert was extremely satisfactory. After paying all expenses, and discharging some outstanding liabilities, the sum of £22 was handed over to the Mayor's Jubilee Fund, to be appropriated to the "Hospital Fund" department.



Music at Park Street Baptist Church, Luton.

PROBABLY there is no greater chapel-going town in the whole of the United Kingdom than Luton. It contains a population of upwards of 32,000, the major portion of whom are women—in fact, report says there are about seven women to one man. This is doubtless mainly attributable to the exigencies of the straw hat trade, which forms its staple industry.

Walking through the streets one cannot but observe the many Nonconformist places of worship, handsome and otherwise, to which the bulk of the populace flock Sunday after Sunday. Episcopal churches seem quite out of the running here, save the fine old parish church, where the excellent musical services conducted by Mr. Fred Gostelow and his really splendid choir of nearly seventy voices, are an attractive feature. In the musical life of the town Mr. Gostelow takes a lion's share, as, quite apart from his work at the church, he is pretty freely mixed up with the music of the Free churches, both at home and abroad.

It is generally considered that one of the best musical services amongst the Nonconformists is to be heard at the Chapel Street Wesleyan Church, under the direction of Mr. Sidney Bennett, to which we hope to refer more fully in the near future. For this month's notice, however, we wished to write of a Baptist church, and our attention during a recent visit to Luton was directed to the above-named sanctuary, which historically takes first place amongst the chapels in the town.

As far back as 1686 the "Old Baptist Meeting"

was built by one Richard Sutton, who sold it to trustees in 1698 for the munificent sum of *five shillings*. What a startling contrast this to the one hundred and fifty thousand pounds paid recently for a Baptist church in Scotland!

Three chapels have been built since the original, one of which was blown down by a gale two hours after service closed on a Sunday evening. Many ancient altar tombs, some dated 1700, still stand in the burying-ground adjoining the sanctuary, through which a fine old avenue of trees shelters the stone pathway leading to the entrance.

Records show that John Bunyan frequently preached here, and there is now in the vestry a chair which belonged to the celebrated tinker-preacher. The first pastor was Mr. Marsom, a fellow-prisoner of Bunyan, to whose memory a handsome monument is placed in the chapel, and whose tomb adjoins the building. He was minister of the church in 1707, at which time there appears to have been 229 members upon the roll. During the pastorate of the Rev. Ebenezer Daniels (1812-1830) we read that the "Old Baptist Meeting House was noted for its large congregations and its *superior choir of singers*."

Latter-day pastors have been the Rev. J. W. Genders, the Rev. J. H. Blake, whose daughter presided over musical affairs for several years, and the present minister, the Rev. Frank Thompson, who has conducted the church's doings for the last five years.

Park Street Chapel seats about 1,000 persons. The church now has a list of 700 members, and 800 scholars are taught in the Sunday-schools. New accommodation for the latter is contemplated; in fact, we believe tenders have just been received for the erection of some substantial school buildings on a vacant piece of ground at the rear of the church. Many societies of a varied nature are connected with both church and school, so that altogether this famous "Old Baptist Meeting," in spite of its venerableness, is well alive to present-day needs, and is able through the instrumentality of the Rev. Frank Thompson, its energetic pastor, to take a large share in the religious life of the neighbourhood.

The organ is a sweet-toned instrument containing fourteen stops, built by Foster and Andrews. It stands alone in a recess at the back of the pulpit.

The choir occupy seats in the galleries on either side, and are thus rather awkwardly divided, an arrangement which seems prevalent in Luton. Below the pulpit is a large platform capable of seating sixty or seventy people, which in the ordinary way is practically unused. We would suggest that this position should be taken up by the choristers instead of the side galleries above, as thus their influence in the singing generally would have a much greater effect, whilst the fact of their being united would be distinctly beneficial to themselves and to the organist. We sincerely hope the authorities will see their way clear to effect this alteration ere long, and so take an important step in the improvement of their musical services. Perhaps the back tier of seats on the platform might be raised a little and thus

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add to the good effect. For special musical services and concerts we believe some such arrangement as we suggest has been carried out, which proves its efficacy in no small measure.

The heads of the musical department are Mr. Sydney C. Baker (whose portrait heads this article), and Mr. Bert Tomlin (whose likeness we also give).

Mr. Baker presides at the organ in a very efficient manner. His first appearance as an organist was made at this chapel when he was but twelve years old, in deputizing for Miss Blake. Soon after that he went to live at Weymouth, and there studied the organ with Mr. Boyton Smith, for whom he occasionally deputized at the parish church. On his return to Luton he became a pupil of Mr. Gostelow's and sometimes took the services for him at his church until three and a half years ago, when he was appointed organist at Park Street, where he has succeeded in improving the choir to a considerable extent. In this he has been associated with Mr. Tomlin, who has been a popular and energetic member of the choir for several years, and is also conductor of the Luton Vocal Union, which consists of about 100 members; they have given many very successful concerts in the district, and last winter performed *Maritana* in the Town Hall with professional soloists in a highly creditable manner.

On special occasions Mr. Tomlin conducts the choir at Park Street Chapel and otherwise does his best to foster its welfare. Such good service has he done that he was recently presented by his fellow-choristers with a massive silver teapot and salver on the occasion of his marriage with Miss Nellie Fletcher, a local contralto of good repute.

The chief items of importance in the music of the church are the festival of the Sunday-school and the annual concert given on behalf of the poor at Christmas. At the former some ten or twelve selections of anthems and hymns are sung by 800 scholars, which prove a source of great attraction. Some of the recent anthems have been compositions by Sullivan, Bridge, Barnby, M. B. Foster, Gostelow, etc., etc. Since Mr. Baker's appointment one of his compositions is always welcomed in the programme.

The concert for the poor has sprung from a miscellaneous programme by local amateurs to be one of the musical events of the season. They

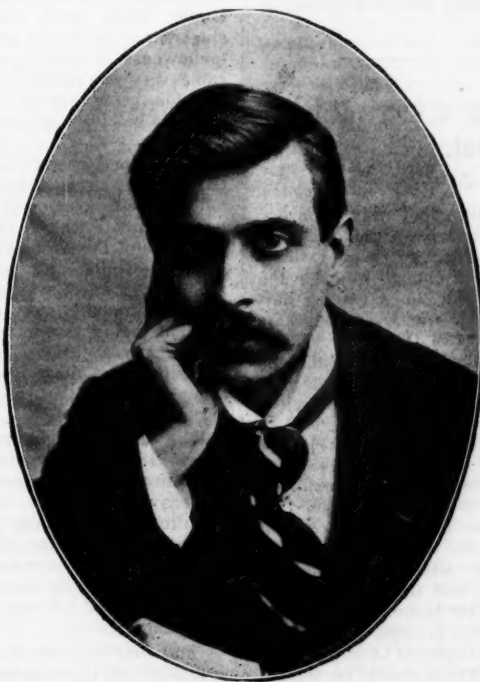
have followed regularly for eighteen years, and latter concerts have included several of the well-known choral works and oratorio selections, whilst the singers have included the names of Miss Florence Bethell, Miss Greta Williams, Miss Lilian Foote, Mr. Maldwyn Humphreys, Mr. Samuel Heath (a bass of great local fame), and Mr. Alexander Tucker.

It is not yet customary to sing anthems at every service on Sundays, such a luxury being reserved for occasions only. It is to be hoped that the musical appetite of the congregation will not much longer be satisfied with such meagre fare, and that a regular anthem at the services will soon form part of the religious feast. At present the Sunday music consists mainly of hymn tunes. Excellent,

of course, and thoroughly wholesome diet, still scarcely sufficient to adequately maintain the interest of a choir of forty members headed by two enthusiastic musicians who are anxious to do more. From all we were able to ascertain during our visit to the church there seems very little reason why much more music should not find a place in the Park Street order of service. Mr. Baker is looking forward to the publication of the New Baptist Hymnal, and sincerely hopes those in command will sanction its introduction. This, with a removal of choir seats as we suggest, would surely prove a good incentive to the service of praise in this time-honoured sanctuary.

There was plenty of hearty congregational

singing on Sunday morning, July 4th, when we were present. Ladies' voices, of course, predominated, and the sopranos were ever uppermost in more senses than one. Everyone seemed at home in the hymns and tunes selected, and there was a brisk swing pervading their rendering, possibly at times a trifle too brisk. For instance, the hymn "Eternal Light" calls for a more reverent and soulful style of singing than we heard. In the matter of light and shade and fine elocution the congregation have room for improvement. No fault in this respect can be found with the playing of the organist, Mr. Baker; on the other hand, he did his best to infuse into the singing such elements as we mention, his variations of tone-colour always being exceedingly well in accord with the words he was accompanying. In his voluntaries, also, he evinced qualities which proved him to be a sound and careful musician. His stately tune to the hymn, "The Lord of glory reigns, He reigns on



high," also told us somewhat of his gifts as a composer.

In the matter of choir rehearsals, Mr. Baker finds difficulty in getting anything like a muster at this time of the season, most of the choristers being engaged in business until a late hour during the first half of the year. During that period, therefore, music at Luton has to be shelved for the most part, as far as week nights are concerned.

Our space is well-nigh spent, or we should have liked to have said much concerning the pastor's good work in the pulpit. He seems the right man in the right place; in musical affairs he is always ready to say a word of encouragement, in fact Mr. Baker says he cannot speak too highly of the kindly help and consideration always received at his hands.

The Nonconformist Choir Union Festival.

(By a Special Reporter.)

QUEEN'S week and Queen's weather! The Nonconformist Choir Union has indeed had little cause for complaint against the capricious Clerk, whose vagaries have been considerate enough to place the Crystal Palace Festival, as a rule, on a smiling day. It was so on June 26th. The air was warm, but there were gusts of cool breezes; and the many visitors from the country, some of whom, no doubt, had been in London during the Jubilee demonstrations, must have returned home without unfavourable impressions of London weather.

It was thought that the Saturday falling in Jubilee week might have the effect of thinning both choir and audience. From personal observation I should say that the audience was, if anything, a little larger than usual, while, though there were certainly some gaps at the summit of the orchestra, the choir was little less numerous than the average attendance in former years. It is not improbable that the audience embraced a larger variety than ever before; some of our Colonial cousins may have been present, as assuredly there were some solemn and dignified Orientals—who seemed to forbear smiling lest they should be thought villains.

The proceedings of the day, so far as the Nonconformist Choir Union was concerned, began at a few minutes past one o'clock with the choir competition. Much interest was evidently taken in this. A very fair number of people followed the performances of the choirs with keen attention, and when the competing choirs came one by one into the audience after their work was done, the interest was redoubled. Each choir appeared to have its well-wishers among the audience, though good work was impartially applauded.

It was a little unfortunate that the competition for small choirs fell through owing to an insufficient number of entries. In the large choir competition there were five competing choirs; Dr. Turpin was again the judge, and Mr. A. L. Cowley was indefatigable in "stewarding" the choirs and keeping the competition well up to time.

I was struck by the different "formation" adopted by the different conductors. The Stacksteads choir was placed in a very close semi-circle, with the conductor as centre; the second choir, Old Baptist, Rushden, stood in a much more extended arc; the

third, Colne Road Wesleyan, Burnley, almost hugged the conductor; the fourth, Union Street Wesleyan, Maidstone, adopted an extended arc, the rear rank being placed higher than the front; while the fifth, the Queen's Road Wesleyan, Northampton, were massed in a solid phalanx. From the point of view of the effect to be produced on the audience, both the Stacksteads and the Colne Road choirs were not judiciously placed; but, as we shall see, they lost nothing by that.

The first choir, Stacksteads Wesleyan, Lancashire, numbered twenty-eight voices, the majority of whom were unusually young. Indeed, the voices of the tenors and basses struck me as being hardly formed; on the other hand, the contraltos were remarkably full and rich. The test piece, Booth's anthem, "Thou crownest the year," was well rendered, the phrasing, the expression and the *tempo* being admirable. The voluntary unaccompanied piece, a difficult "Hymn to Music," by Dudley Buck, made large demands on the young singers, and it was in this particularly that a want of mellowness in the voices was observable. But they came very successfully through a trying ordeal, intonation being almost perfect, and more artificial qualities bearing witness to much careful and intelligent training.

The second choir, Old Baptist, Rushden, numbered thirty-three voices, of whom many were well-seasoned adults. In balance, and in quality of tone, this choir undoubtedly excelled the first. With the possible exception of the contralto, all the parts were richer in tone; the soprano was particularly full and clear, and the general effect was of greater "body." The conductor adopted a very much quicker *tempo* for the anthem, and in places took considerable liberties with it, perhaps a little over-doing the contrasts. The phrasing was a shade less delicate than that of the first choir. The secular piece chosen was A. R. Gaul's "Daybreak."

The Colne Road, Burnley, choir, which came third, put itself at a disadvantage by its cramped formation. The singers sang *at* one another rather than *to* the judge. The balance of parts was less satisfactory than in any of the other choirs, and this choir was the only one in which the contralto was very markedly the weakest part. There was a suspicion of flattening in the anthem, but in every other respect the choir did extremely well. Pinsuti's "Eldorado" was the part-song chosen.

The fourth choir, from Union Street, Maidstone, consisted of thirty young voices, but was at a great disadvantage in that only eight of these were male. The deficiency was in some degree compensated by the excellence of the tenor, which was, all things considered, the best of all the choirs. The alto was somewhat weak. With this choir, too, there was a tendency to take the anthem too fast, but on the whole they sang extremely well. They chose for secular piece Pinsuti's "Parting Gift."

The applause which greeted the last choir, from Queen's Road, Northampton, showed that it had a large body of sympathisers in the audience. That sympathy was discounted, however, by the length of time which elapsed before the conductor was satisfied with the disposition of his forces; and by the time all things were ready the audience was decidedly impatient. This was the largest choir of them all, numbering thirty-eight voices. In fulness and quality of tone I thought it excelled all but the Rushden choir; in the niceties of expression it fell short of one or two. The part-song chosen was Mendelssohn's "Hunting Song."

A few minutes having elapsed, Dr. Turpin rose to make his award. Unluckily a large portion of the audience, now swelled by the addition of the competing

choirs, had risen to their feet, and were, indeed, moving from the hall; so that the judge's opening words, if not more, were lost on a good many. It would be well for Mr. Cowley to announce on a future occasion—I say Mr. Cowley because his clear voice is so telling—that the award will be made immediately on the conclusion of the performance, and to ask the audience to keep their seats, and to *keep quiet*. It was obvious that all the choirs had reached a very high place; what the audience wanted, what the choirs wanted, was to know in what particular points one choir excelled the others. I do not know that anyone would be disposed to question the award of first place to the Stacksteads choir, or the commendation of the Burnley choir; but there were certainly some who by no means understood, from Dr. Turpin's speech, the grounds on which he based his decision. It is right to say that the Stacksteads choir was highly applauded. Dr. Turpin has since forwarded to the Committee the following detailed report:—

"The Adjudicator's notes place the Stacksteads Choir in front with 165 marks of a possible 200 maximum; a plan practically assigning 100 possible marks to the performance of Mr. Booth's anthem and a second 100 to the rendering of the part-song in each case selected by the choir authorities. The Burnley Choir made a good second with 156 marks. The first-named choir was the smaller of the two. A compact choir with selected voices has, in the adjudicator's opinion, some advantages in purity of tone, more ready control, and often a better balance of parts. On the other hand, if the voices of a larger choir have been selected on a broader principle, and even with a possible loss of tone-purity, it has a certain advantage in the possession of a larger breathing capacity, an increased power of phrase sustentation; a distinct gain, truly, in non-professional choirs of only partly-trained voices. Unquestionably the Stacksteads Choir possessed many good voices; the tenors displayed much purity of tone, and sang with remarkably correct intonation in the upper notes. The complaint, which has been noticed by various musical authorities, was obvious in this and in all the choirs, however—the want of deep bass tone. There seems to be a growing scarcity of real bass voices; doubtless caused to a large extent by the habit of the modern composer to write high bass parts, and the tendency to favour baritone songs with high-pitched melodic sentences and climax effects. In almost every department of judgment, tune, time, tone, enunciation, phrasing, expression, balance of parts as noticeable in resultant effect alone excepted, this choir slightly but still decisively led the way. Much good singing was done by the Rushden Choir; but in loss of pitch through obvious fatigue, especially in the parts sung by ladies, this choir failed more than the others. The Burnley Choir, a large one, maintained a very even record of excellence. The admirable and well-trained Northampton Choir, closely following in many respects the choirs standing first and second, gave an almost too dramatic rendering, as slightly lacking generally picturesque accent and intensity of Mendelssohn's Hunting Part-song. This choir gained 151 marks, an admirable record. The Maidstone Choir came very close with 150 marks, though notes were held a little too long, to the slight disturbance of the time and phrasing. This is a most promising and efficient body of voices. The Rushden Choir, though losing pitch, and standing somewhat lowest in marks for phrasing, deserved much praise for good general effect, and gained so many as 144 marks. The close approximation of numbers in some competitions, as in this, must be taken as strikingly indicative of the general advance and all-round excellence of very many choirs. It would be difficult to name a much closer competition than the one now under consideration;

and such a result is a direct evidence of the good, sound work now being done by the Nonconformist Choir Union; which can show an array of choral forces not to be surpassed in general intelligence and level excellence.

"The part-songs selected included (1) "Hymn to Music" (Dudley Buck); (2) "Daybreak"; (3) "Eldorado"; (4) "The Parting Kiss" (Pinsuti); and (5) "Hunt Song" (Mendelssohn). A truly model selection of effective pieces, in every way adapted for the display of well-trained choirs."

Precisely at four o'clock Mr. Minshall took his stand at the conductor's desk. The choir, as I have already said, was perhaps a little smaller than last year, and the altos were, as usual, the weakest section. On the other hand, the orchestra was larger than usual, and it will not be out of place here to congratulate Mr. Croger on having got together so excellent a band, and on having obtained from it such excellent results. The double basses and the wood wind seemed to me to require augmenting, and I was a little surprised that in one or two of the pieces that had orchestral accompaniment more support was not rendered in the lower parts by the organ. It will not be taken amiss if I say that the enthusiastic cornetists will do well in future to moderate their jubilation—Jubilee is over!—a little, for really they were almost constantly a shade in advance of the beat.

It is unnecessary to go through the programme seriatim. The choruses were sung with quite as much vigour and precision as ever, in my experience; indeed, it is to me a standing marvel that so large a body, with no opportunity of combined rehearsal, spread over so large an orchestra, should swim so buoyantly through by no means smooth seas of contrapuntal and fugal work without collapse. The fact speaks exceedingly well for the diligence of the several choir-masters, for the watchful attention of the choristers, and, lastly—he must allow me to say so, and not cut it out as he usually does—for the coolness, discretion, and sureness of beat of Mr. Minshall himself. There was one bad start, the opening of "Let their celestial concerts;" there was a little swaying here and there, particularly in the running passages of the same chorus; there was no reeling and staggering to and fro like a drunken man. As regards accuracy, I detected only two positive blunders: the first in Dr. Prout's *Jubilate*, where the basses were far from unanimous in their delivery of a certain A flat; the second in the Wagner chorus, where the dotted quaver and the following semi-quaver were uniformly replaced by two quavers.

The programme was of special interest this year by reason of the fact that four of the pieces were from the pens of Nonconformist composers (will the day ever come when the whole programme will be so formed?): I allude to Dr. Prout's setting of the 100th Psalm, Mr. Maunder's anthem, "While the earth remaineth," and the pieces "selected from the MSS. sent in competition"—in other words, the prize anthem and part-song—composed by Dr. Orlando Mansfield and Mr. Arthur Berridge respectively. Dr. Prout's work, solid, straightforward, ecclesiastical, thoroughly "English," was decidedly the most successfully rendered of all the pieces. The orchestra accompanied remarkably well, and Miss Margaret Hoare's solo (No. 2 in the work) provided a welcome rest between the choruses. Dr. Mansfield's anthem is a well-written but not particularly interesting composition; none of the prize-anthems have been so successful as Mr. Matthew Kingston's in the early days of the Union. It is noteworthy, too, that Wagner appeared for the first time in the programme, his "Hail, bright abode," from *Tannhäuser*, concluding the performance, and being rendered with great gusto. I said "concluding," but when

Mr. Briscoe dashed off into "Rule Britannia," and "God save the Queen," the effervescing loyalty of choir and audience took up the strains, and rolled them after thirsty souls, like myself, in search of tea.

It remains to add that Miss Margaret Hoare contributed two excellent solos, "Let the bright Seraphim" (to which Mr. Solomon played the trumpet obbligato with marvellous success), and a new song, "A Summer Morn," by R. B. Addison. Solos are difficult and trying to sing at the Palace, but the applause which greeted Miss Hoare showed that her good style and charming voice were thoroughly appreciated. Mr. Croger's band gave spirited renderings of Meyerbeer's Coronation March and a "Diamond Jubilee" march, and the Stacksteads Prize Choir repeated with great effect on the Handel orchestra, after the prizes had been handed their conductor, Mr. Holden, the part-song which they had already so well sung in the concert hall.

Mr. Briscoe had less work than usual to do at the organ, accompanying wholly only two of the anthems; but this he did with his accustomed taste. If he will permit a friendly suggestion, it is that he should slightly abbreviate the preliminary skirmishing (shall I call it?) before the concert begins. We British organists are perhaps only too justly scoffed at for our extemporising; it is Sir Walter Parratt, I believe, who, in his epigrammatic way, has said that there is too much of the "lastly, finally, absolutely lastly, and positively finally and lastly" about it. Whether we agree with Sir Walter or not, a quarter of an hour's extemporising must try any organist's powers, not to say an audience's patience, to the straining point, and five minutes is enough for anybody.

During the evening Mr. Charles Lymn, the able organist of the Nottingham Nonconformist Choir Union, gave an interesting organ recital, which was much appreciated by a large audience.

According to the Crystal Palace returns, the choir numbered 3,365, and the total number of visitors at the Palace for the day was 14,977.

A word of praise must be given to the hon. sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, for the excellent arrangements he made, the day's proceedings passing off without a hitch of any kind.

The following choirs took part in the Festival:—

LONDON.

Bow—Harley Street Congregational.
Brixton—Unitarian.
Brondesbury Chapel.
Camden Town—Park Chapel, Arlington Road.
City Road—Whitefield Tabernacle.
City Temple, E.C.
Clapton—Downs Chapel.
Dalston—Wesleyan; Shrubland Road Congregational.
Dulwich, E.—Emanuel Congregational.
Finchley, E.—Congregational.
Forest Hill—Sydenham Baptist.
Fulham—Dawes Road Congregational.
Hackney—Old Gravel Pit.
Highbury Hill—Baptist.
Highbury Quadrant.
Holloway—Caledonian Road Congregational.
Holloway, Upper—Junction Road Congregational.
Kentish Town—Congregational; Hawley Road Chapel.
Limehouse—Coverdale Congregational.
Lordship Lane—Baptist.
Newington, S.E.—Old York Road.
Paddington—Craven Hill.
Peckham—Clifton Congregational.
Plumstead—Robert's Street Primitive Methodist.
Poplar—Trinity Congregational.
Regent's Park Chapel.

Stockwell—Baptist.

Stoke Newington—Wesleyan; Abney Congregational.
Tottenham—High Cross Congregational; Wesleyan.

Walthamstow—Trinity Congregational; Wood Street Congregational.

Wandsworth—Victoria Baptist.

West Ham—Unitarian.

PROVINCIAL.

Amphill—Union Chapel.

Bacup—Heald Wesleyan.

Barnoldswick—Wesleyan Chapel.

Birmingham—Telly Oak Primitive Methodist.

Bournemouth—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Brierfield—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Burnley—Colne Road, Wesleyan; Myrtle Bank Chapel; Barley Primitive Methodist; Myrtle Bank; Manchester Road Congregational; Fulledge Wesleyan; Whittlefield Wesleyan; Bethel Primitive Methodist.

Burton-on-Trent—Swadlincote Baptist; Burton Nonconformist Choir Union.

Chelmsford—Congregational Church.

Chepstow—Beulah Congregational.

Colne—Congregational; Primitive Methodist; Trinity Baptist; Langroyd Road Wesleyan.

Cornholme—United Methodist Free Church.

Coventry—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Darlaston—Primitive Methodist.

Denford—Wesleyan.

Denton—Hope Congregational; Trinity Wesleyan United Methodist Free Church.

Desborough—Congregational.

Folkestone—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Glastonbury—Wesleyan.

Glossop—Wesleyan Circuit; Princes' Street Chapel; Shrewsbury Street Primitive Methodist; United Methodist Free Church; Howard Street Wesleyan; Fitzalan Street.

Grimsby—United Methodist Free Church.

Hadleigh—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Harpole—Baptist.

Haslingden—Trinity Baptist.

Hatherlow—Congregational.

Hazelgrove—Congregational.

Heywood—Bridge Street Primitive Methodist; Gallow's Hill Wesleyan.

Higham Ferrers—Wesleyan.

Hollingworth—Congregational; Methodist New Connexion.

Huntingdon—Trinity Church.

Hyde—Union Street Congregational; Newton Methodist New Connexion; Newton Wesleyan; Wesleyan.

Ipswich—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Irthlingboro'—Baptist Church.

Keighley—Alice Street Primitive Methodist; Cowling United Methodist Free Church; West Lane Primitive Methodist.

Kettering—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Kislingboro'—Baptist.

Leeds—Queen Street Congregational.

Liverpool—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Maidstone—Union Street Wesleyan.

Middlesbro'—St. George's Congregational.

Nelson—Carr Road Wesleyan; Manchester Road Congregational; Cooper Street Wesleyan.

Newton Abbot—Congregational.

New Malden—Congregational.

Northampton—Queen's Road Wesleyan; Victoria Road Congregational; Kettering Road Primitive Methodist; Regent's Square Wesleyan.

Nottingham—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Oldham—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Otley—Wesleyan Church; Primitive Methodist.

Oxenhope—Horkinstone Baptist.
Ringstead—Wesleyan.

Rochdale—Hallows United Methodist Free Church;
Hamen United Methodist Free Church; Syke
United Methodist Free Church; Whitworth United
Methodist Free Church; Lowerfold United Metho-
dist Free Church; Smallbridge Primitive Metho-
dist; Bamford Congregational; United Methodist
Free Church; Moor Street Congregational; Shaw-
clough Zion Primitive Methodist Chapel; Silver
Street; Bagslate United Methodist Free Church;
Bellfield United Methodist Free Church.

Royston—Kneesworth.

Rushden—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Sandy—Baptist.

Sale—Congregational.

Small Heath—Congregational.

Sowerby Bridge.

Stacksteads—Wesleyan.

Stalybridge—Wesleyan.

St. Neots—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Stockport—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Street, Somerset.

Sutton-in-Craven—Baptist.

Thrapston—Baptist.

Todmorden—Patmos Congregational.

Tonbridge—Wesleyan.

Tunbridge Wells—Baptist Tabernacle.

Uttoxeter—Wesleyan and Congregational Churches.

Walsall—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Warwick—Brook Street Congregational.

Wheatley Lane (near Burnley)—Wesleyan.

Whitworth (near Rochdale)—Hallfold Congregational.

Windsor—William Street Congregational.

Wortley—Armley Branch Road Primitive Methodist.

Wrexham—Pen-y-Bryn Congregational.

THE LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR.

THE Silver Celebration of this excellent institution took place at the Crystal Palace on June 30th, and the day's proceedings proved to be very interesting.

At one o'clock the huge orchestra was crowded with small children, who went through a well-selected programme in a very satisfactory manner, under the able conductorship of Mr. Rowley. The most popular items were, "O rest in Lord," "Sweet is the murmur" (T. M. Pattison), "The Burlesque Band" (Root), "The Chinaman" (A. L. Cowley), some of which were encored, the two latter especially giving much delight to the audience. Mr. W. J. Freeman presided at the organ, and by his skilful manipulation kept the young choristers well together throughout.

At four o'clock the Festival Choir gave their concert. As the audience assembled Mr. Luther Hinton, the veteran conductor, was heartily applauded by the choir. Mr. Whiteman, Mr. Hinton's successor, likewise came in for a very hearty reception, which evidently showed that he is much esteemed by the choir.

The programme was of the usual character. Bunnett's Magnificat in F went with a good swing; D. M. Davis' "The King shall Rejoice" was bold and vigorous, in spite of a misunderstanding in the opening bars of the symphony; the Hallelujah chorus was also steadily rendered; "Victoria" (Barnby), simple and effective, was encored; "In our Boat," a trio for female voices, was pretty; and the final piece, "The Empire Flag," was a bold finish. Mr. Geo. Merritt conducted, and Mr. H. G. Holmes was a thoroughly efficient accompanist. The orchestra, assisted by the Crystal Palace band, played three pieces, conducted by Mr. David M. Davis.

In the evening a concert was given by the Polytechnic and People's Palace Mandoline Band. Miss

Kate Cherry, Miss Annie Layton, and Mr. Alexander Tucker were the vocalists.

During the day Mrs. Layton, F.R.C.O., and Mr. T. H. Goodwin, F.R.C.O., gave organ recitals.

The London Sunday School Choir authorities can with every satisfaction look back upon their twenty-five years of work. They have accomplished much. They deserve every encouragement, and we trust that as much success may attend their labours in years to come.

The Nonconformist Choir Union.

OFFER OF PRIZES.

THE committee of the Nonconformist Choir Union invite composers (all of whom must be either an organist, choirmaster, or other member of a Nonconformist Church or congregation) to send in MS. original compositions, either sacred or secular, for proposed performance at the annual festival to be held at the Crystal Palace next year. For accepted works five guineas each will be given. Anthems must be written in four parts, without solos. Unison passages allowed. They must be of a festival character, and must not take more than seven minutes in performance, preference being given to those suitable for ordinary church use.

Secular compositions must be written in four parts, and not exceed six minutes in performance.

The copyrights of the accepted compositions shall be the property of the Nonconformist Choir Union on payment of the honorariums.

Each composition to be signed with a motto, the same to be written on a sealed envelope, which shall contain the name and address of the composer. Unaccepted compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent for the purpose.

Compositions must be delivered to the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, London, E.C., on or before October 1st.

MET BY CHANCE.—An amusing story is told of Robert Franz, the famous German song-writer, and another equally celebrated composer. The incident occurred soon after the publication of Franz's famous "Open Letter to Edward Hanslick," in which he made severe criticism upon some musical work of the composer, Johannes Brahms. Franz had occasion at that time to take a five or six hours' trip by rail. In the compartment with him was a little man with whom he fell into conversation. The fellow-travellers found each other delightful, and whiled the hours away in agreeable talk, which did not turn upon music. When the train reached Franz's destination, he took out his card-case, saying to his companion, "You have made me pass a most delightful afternoon. Allow me to give you my card." The stranger seemed highly gratified, and offered Franz his card in return. Each looked at the bit of pasteboard he had received in amazement. The stranger's eyes opened wide at reading the name of his merciless critic, "Dr. Robert Franz," while Franz himself was equally astounded at reading on the card in his hand, "Johannes Brahms." There was no time for mutual explanations; but each of the musicians had discovered that, however their ideas might differ from a musical standpoint, they were at least admirable travelling companions, and had found much to enjoy in each other.

The Comparative Position of the Free Church Organist.

By ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD, Mus. Doc. T. U. T., L. Mus. L. C. M., F. R. C. O., L. T. C. L.; Author of "The Student's Harmony," etc., etc.

I.—MORAL AND MUSICAL.

(Concluded from p. 110.)

One great disadvantage in Free Church appointments is the fact that owing to the continual application of the voluntary system, members of those churches forget that a professional musician cannot give without remuneration his time or his abilities. The Non-conformist organist is often asked or expected to play at or organize musical services or entertainments, none of which are specified in his agreement. Of course, this sort of thing only obtains in poor and badly managed churches, and, indeed, the same thing is to be found in the Established Church. Not many years ago the writer was asked by a prominent leader of the Low Church party (whose name we will not advertise by mentioning in this connection) to undertake the playing of something like fifty services per annum beyond those stated on his agreement, and the writer's firm but dignified refusal to do so in his professional capacity, however willing he might be to do so as a private individual, caused his reverend opponent to manifest so much bitterness of heart that further co-operation was impossible, in fact, "the contention was so sharp between them," that, like Paul and Barnabas, "they departed asunder one from the other."

In the matter of freedom from attendance at unnecessary services, the Nonconformist organist has another advantage. He can afford to give an occasional performance at special services when he is spared the burden of attendance on Sundays and on divers fasts and festivals, at services, which are supported only by a few old women of both sexes, and in the conduct of which he cannot feel a tithe of interest.

Many years ago an applicant for a remunerative appointment in a Free Church had often to experience the sickness of hope deferred on account of the comparative scarcity of such appointments. Now, however, they are advertised monthly in the musical papers, and if those in the Established Church are still more numerous, the number of applicants for them is proportionately greater. The voluntary organist is rapidly becoming a *rara avis* in the Free Churches, the difficulty now being that of keeping unqualified amateurs, possessing other sources of income, out of berths which should by right belong to the members of an overcrowded profession.

In the generally unrestricted choice of music the Free Church organist has a decided advantage over his brother of the Establishment. Personally, we have only known of one case in which our right to select music for Free Church services and festivals was ever called into question. And then, being young in years, and childish in malice, we deemed it best to give way, and allow the usurping authority to select the music, while choir and congregation laughed at the unhappy choice, the upshot of the whole affair being a reverting

to the *status quo*. As says the hero of Mark Guy Pearse's "Daniel Quorm and His Religious Notions," "Aw, 'iss, my dear, 'iss, it be quite lawful for to catch 'em with guile."

But the Established organist, though sometimes enjoying a comparatively free hand, is often harassed in his choice of music by an unmusical vicar—"a gentleman," says Mr. Arthur F. Smith, Mus. Bac., "who is really the autocrat of the situation, and who holds the government of his particular church in the hollow of his hand. Say this potentate admires Gregorian music, with its crude progressions and strange cadences? All must give way—organist, choir, and congregation; those who do not like it must either bear it, or go elsewhere." We scarcely know which is worse, the gentleman above described, or one we met some years ago who took so little interest in matters musical, that when requested to choose a few hymns for the Sunday services, he replied in a drawling, nasal tone, and with upturned eyelids, "Aw! choose any hymns you loike, only let them be sweetly full of Jesus!"

This brings us to what is perhaps the supreme advantage of a Free Church appointment, viz., freedom from the personal interference of a clerical autocrat. Personally we have nothing to complain of in this respect. Our relations with the clergy have, with one exception, always been friendly, and in many cases very cordial. Consequently our remarks cannot be actuated by personal bias.

The position of the vicar and the organist is thus laid down by Mr. Blew, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law, in his ably written work on "The Law of Organs and Organists": "While the service is going on the minister has the sole right to say when and how it is to be played, what music shall be performed, and by whom it shall be sung or played. The organist... is guilty of an ecclesiastical offence if he plays on the organ immediately before, or during, or immediately after Divine service, contrary to the direction of the incumbent." Or, as it was decided by Sir R. Phillimore in the case of *Wyndham v. Cole*: "Where there is an organ in a church or chapel of the Church of England, it is not competent to the organist to play on it at any time in defiance of the directions of the minister." Hence if the incumbent be a High Churchman and insist on Gregorians and adaptations from Romish church music spoilt in the adapting, the organist must obey. Similarly, if the incumbent be a Low Churchman, and care for the inanities of Moody and Sankey or Jackson in F, the organist has no redress, remonstrance in most cases being but the prelude to resignation. Of course we do not for one moment assert that the cases we have been describing are universal. But they are most certainly typical of many cases which have come under our notice in parish churches under the ecclesiastical law. In the event of a similar interference on the part of a Free Church minister, the organist would have the power of appeal to the deacons, elders, or trustees, and, failing these, to the whole body of the church and congregation from whose contributions his stipend is derived.

Another annoyance from which the Free Church

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organist is free is that of the interference of curates. Here, again, we cannot speak from experience, as we never would recognise these gentlemen as having any authority in matters musical, whatever feelings of respect and friendship we might have entertained towards them in other connections. We never forgot the words of Mr. Blew: "A curate, unless requested by the vicar to do so, has no earthly right to say anything about the service."

Lastly, there are some who think that in Nonconformist churches there is more interference on the part of church officers and congregations than on the part of churchwardens and congregations of the Establishment. Again our experience teaches us the reverse. The officials of some Nonconformist churches are, perhaps, meddlesome and consequently muddling, but they can generally be approached upon the religious or intellectual side and, like most true Englishmen, have a respect, if not a liking, for a man strong enough to put and keep them in their places.

Churchwardens and congregations in the Establishment are by no means entirely sympathetic. They are quite as ready with their criticisms as members of other sects, and their criticisms are not marked by any larger proportion of sense and charity than those of other carpers. But we have known cases in which Nonconformist congregations have gathered round their organist in such a manner that the church officials have found it impossible to give him his *congé* "because they feared the people." But in a church under the ecclesiastical law, the organist is legally the "servant" of the incumbent, and no exhibition of public feeling can save him from legal dismissal at the hands of the latter.

In a future article the writer hopes to be permitted to say something about the legal, social, and financial position of the Nonconformist organist as compared with that of the State Church organist. So far, he hopes he has conducted his comparisons with impartiality, or at any rate in such a manner as to avoid the proverbial odiousness said to be attached to comparisons of all kinds. At all events, he claims to speak from experience and observation, and holding no appointment at present himself, and having no immediate intention of seeking for any, he trusts his claim to freedom from prejudice will be the more readily conceded.

TONIC SOL-FA FESTIVAL.

THE annual Festival of the Tonic Sol-fa Association was held at the Crystal Palace on the 17th ult., and as usual proved a success. Three concerts were given during the day. Five thousand juveniles—all certificated Sol-faists—took possession of the Handel Orchestra in the morning, and gave a selection of music, sacred and secular, under the conductorship of Mr. S. Filmer Rook. One of the most popular items was Stainer's "A Soldier's Life," which was encored. In the afternoon what was termed a "Great Welsh Festival" was held, when some 3,000 singers from many parts of Wales gave a programme of Welsh music, conducted by Dr. Joseph Parry of Cardiff. Whether it was wise to fill the programme with nothing but Dr. Parry's own compositions is a question. That the singing was hearty goes without saying, for the Welsh people know how to sing, and their voices (especially the

basses) were of good quality. The chief feature of the concert was a love-poem, entitled "The Dream," written for chorus, brass bands, string orchestra, and organ.

The evening concert, given by 2,000 adult singers under the able conductorship of Mr. Leonard C. Venables, proved a satisfactory finish to the day's proceedings.

Nonconformist Church Organs.

MARYLEBONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
LONDON.

Built by Messrs. Hele and Co., of Plymouth.

Great Organ (13 Stops).

	Feet	Pipes
Double Open Diapason	16	56
Open Diapason No. 1	8	56
Open Diapason No. 2	8	56
Claribel	8	56
Stopped Diapason	8	56
Flute Harmonique	4	56
Principal	4	56
Twelfth	3	56
Fifteenth	2	56
Mixture (3 ranks)	—	168
Double Trumpet (lower octave prepared for)	16	44
Posaune	8	56
Clarion	4	56

Swell Organ (13 Stops).

Double Diapason	16	56
Open Diapason	8	56
Gedact	8	56
Salicional	8	56
Voix Celestes	8	44
Gemshorn	4	56
Harmonic Piccolo	2	56
Mixture (3 ranks)	—	168
Contra Fagotto	16	56
Cornocean	8	56
Oboe	8	56
Vox Humana	8	56
Clarion	4	56

Choir Organ (8 Stops).

Gamba	8	56
Flauto Traverso	8	56
Dulciana	8	56
Gedact	8	56
Lieblich Flute	4	56
Flautina	2	56
Clarionet	8	56
Orchestral Oboe	8	56

Pedal Organ (7 Stops).

Sub-Bass (Stopped Pipes to GGG.		
Quint below)	32	30
Open Diapason	16	30
Bourdon	16	30
Violone	16	30
Bass Flute	8	30
Violoncello	8	30
Trombone	16	30

Compass, Manuals, CC to G³ in alt. 56 notes; Pedal, CCC to Tenor F, 30 notes.

Couplers.

Great to Pedals.	Swell to Great.
Swell to Pedals.	Swell to Choir.
Choir to Pedals.	Swell Octave.

Composition Pedals.

Four to Great and Pedals in Proportion,
Three to Swell Organ.
Great to Pedals by reversible Centre Pedal.

The Power of Music.

BY DR. LYMAN ABBOTT.

LIFE is one great symphony. From the cradle to the grave one finds in music an expression of his highest, richest, divinest life. Music lulls the infant to peaceful slumbers; by its aid the lover woos and wins the maiden of his choice. Music heightens the joy of the wedding; stimulates the flagging footsteps of the soldier in the weary march; is the expression of joy and thankfulness for the harvest season; aids by its voice the merrymaking after toil; glides with healing sympathy into the funeral rites; and in death, had we but ears to hear, the music from the other world might roll in upon us and resolve in heavenly harmonies all discords of earth's jangling life.

Music is the highest of the arts. The musical artist is nearest to being a creator. The architect must study the woods and mountain caves as models of the structure he would erect; the painter copies the scenes of nature; the poet gets from life the experience which he puts into beautiful language; the musician alone is never an imitator, certainly never when at his best. Though he may suggest the thunder and the rain, the call of bird, or the roar of battle, the music that lives—that makes one willing to say with Paul that "he knows not whether he is in the body or out of the body"—such music is never imitative. As Browning has it: the musician out of three sounds makes, not a fourth, but a star. Other arts may be corrupt; music is never corrupt, even though associated with corrupt words.

Music is the humanest of all the arts—it brings men together. You who are practical organists or members of church music-committees may doubt the statement by reason of some of your experiences, but nevertheless it is true that music is a great unifier. There is no schism, no heresy, no denominationalism, in music. Music stirs to worship, and whatever stirs to worship is orthodox; there is no heretical music. The Church may question the source of its doctrines, but it takes its hymns from all sources—Roman Catholic, Protestant, Calvinistic, Arminian, Evangelical and Unitarian. Music has this unifying power beyond creed or preaching because it expresses the profoundest experiences and sentiments of the human heart; sentiments which nothing else can express. Music is the most sacred of the forms of expression because it goes deepest and gives voice to those feelings common to humanity; hence it is that music has the highest place in the sanctuary.

But the definitions given are of music as it ought to be in worship; not as we sometimes find it, where the conception of the leaders is of a concert given to an audience, or of a magnet used to attract people to the discourse. The music of the church should be the expression of the highest life in the deepest heart of humanity. I should like for a moment to stand as interpreter of the people, and to say to you singers and organists: You must feel what you sing and be the interpreters of this highest life if you wish to magnify your office. You err if you think we come to church as to a concert; we want you to express

the inspiration which the minister is not able to express, because he has only words. Then I should like to turn about, and as the interpreter of the singers and organists, say to the people that you must not expect us to give you merely the evidence of our artistic accomplishments, to sing for your criticism, but to voice your purest, your deepest, your most inexpressible life; to express to your Maker for you the love, the penitence and the aspirations of your hearts.

We want you musicians to so speak that God shall hear our unuttered longings; we want you to bring awe and love and worship in your own hearts to your service in the sanctuary, and to remember always that you are singing for Him. Yet more than the minister speaks for God, you sing for Him. Sweeter than the mother's song, stronger than the wedding music, more uplifting than the march, more joyous than the harvest thanksgiving, should be your expression of the divine life and love to the assembled worshippers. When you do thus sing all hearts will answer, Amen.

The Art of Playing Accompaniments.

BY L. W. BISHOP.

THIS is an important and much neglected department of music. Have you never heard anyone say, when questioned as to his or her musical ability, "Oh, yes, I play a little; enough for accompaniments, and that sort of thing." How little such people know what they are talking about! and I pity the singers that have to put up with their playing.

The class of people referred to seem to think that, no matter how slight their knowledge of music may be, they can manage to get through an accompaniment satisfactorily, and if they make any mistakes the voice will cover them. But then, on the other hand, if they do come to a part they *know*, they often completely drown the voice they are accompanying (?).

Accompanying is an art in itself, and to be done well must be studied as such. To be fitted for it one must be fairly good at sight-reading, and must also have control enough of technic to be able to forget himself, and to follow and be in perfect sympathy with the person he is accompanying.

The accompanist must be willing to take a subordinate position, and not try to make a display of, or call attention to, his part. For, to be successful in this work, one must, for the time being, lose his own personality in the musician who can be led entirely by the interpretation of the singer. This is the secret of the true accompanist, and anyone who thoroughly appreciates this fact will find great pleasure, as well as profit, in the practice of accompanying either the voice or another instrument.

The importance of this study is very much in evidence at the present time, when many of the songs have so much made of the piano part. It is often a *piece* in itself in the matter of work and expression, and forms a very essential feature of the composition, whatever it may be, and yet it must always remain the subordinate part of a perfect whole.—*The Etude*.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

KENTISH TOWN.—On Thursday evening, June 17th, a very enjoyable social meeting was held in the Congregational Church in connection with the departure of the organist and choirmaster, Mr. Geo. H. Lawrence. A musical programme was provided, but the feature of the evening was the presentation. In an appropriate speech Mr. Richards asked Mr. Lawrence to accept from the members of the choir and a few friends from the congregation who were desirous of joining, a walnut writing desk as a token of their esteem and regard. He spoke of the loyalty Mr. Lawrence had received from the members of the choir during the four years he had been amongst them, and expressed their regret at his departure. A further presentation was made by the Sunday School Choir of a couple of pictures in recognition of his services in leading them to success in the choir competitions. Mr. Lawrence in reply thanked all the friends who had contributed towards such handsome presents, and said he would always treasure pleasant memories of the many kindnesses he had received at Kentish Town.

PROVINCIAL.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.—On Sunday, July 4th, the annual services in connection with the Sunday School of Christ Church (M.N.C.) took place. Special anniversary hymns were sung by the children and choir, numbering in all 120 voices, under the conductorship of Mr. W. H. Smith, the choirmaster. One of the hymns, "Forward by the right," a marching song (H. E. Nichol), was much appreciated, and was sung at each service by special request. The choir sang anthems at each service: Morning—"Daughter of Zion"; afternoon—Jubilee Anthem, "Behold, O God our Defender" (Spark), and "Hearken unto Me, My people" (Sullivan); evening—"The Radiant Morn" (Woodward), all of which were well rendered. In the afternoon also, solos were sung; and recitations were given by some of the scholars. Mr. S. T. Marsden, the church organist, presided at the organ, and Mr. W. Storey acted as accompanist to the soloists.

HARROGATE.—Mr. J. Allanson Benson, so long connected with the Methodist Free Church, has been compelled to move to the South of England in search of health. His removal is regretted by all who knew him. Mr. and Mrs. Benson were presented with an illuminated address and table ornaments from friends at the M. F. Church. Other presentations have also been made. Upon the musical life of Harrogate, Mr. Benson's influence has had a most beneficial effect.

OXFORD.—The first united P. S. A. meeting was held in the New Town Hall, on June 20, the Mayor presiding. Mr. Robinson Souttar, M.P., was the speaker. The soloists were Mrs. Stringer, Miss Godwin Parker, Mr. Howes. Mr. A. Wiblin presided at the organ and played several solos in excellent style. Mr. W. L. Biggs of the East Oxford P. S. A. and organist of St. Peter-le-Bailey Church conducted. He had a string band of twenty-three players and a chorus of ninety-two voices, the congregation numbering about 2,000. A varied and interesting programme was very successfully carried out.

ROCHDALE.—On the 15th ult., the choir of Milton Congregational Church and friends visited Hawarden, accompanied by the late pastor, the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell. The following message was sent in to the aged

statesman: "The Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell and the choir of Milton Church send congratulations and warmest wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. Rochdale, the town of Cobden and Bright, regards Mr. Gladstone's life and work as one of the chief glories of the Queen's reign." The choir sang in front of the terrace "Our Blest Redeemer" and "Eternal Light." While the latter was being sung Mr. Gladstone, who appeared in splendid health, came on to the terrace. The choir ceased singing, but the right hon. gentleman at once said, "I've come out to hear you sing; pray go on." Newman's hymn, "Lead kindly Light," was then sung, and Mr. Gladstone listened bareheaded, evidently with deep feeling. At its close the ex-Premier addressed the choir. "That is really beautiful," he said, "and worthy of the great hymn you have just sung. I am glad you cultivate music with such excellent effect. I am sure it does credit to Lancashire."

WALSALL.—The new organ, built by Messrs. Nicholson and Lord, in the Centenary Wesleyan Chapel was recently opened by Mr. C. W. Perkins, of Birmingham, who expressed himself as much pleased with the instrument. His recital was much enjoyed. Mr. F. C. Nicholson, Mr. Bevan and Mrs. Evans contributed vocal items in excellent style.

COLONIAL.

WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND).—On Sunday, May 16th, the special Sunday School Anniversary services, in connection with St. John's Presbyterian Church, were held in St. John's Church. A large chorus of 400 scholars were ably conducted by Mr. Wm. Hopkirk, while Mr. Maughan Barnett (organist of St. John's) presided at the organ. At the morning service Mr. Barnett played, opening voluntary, Andante (Smart); offertory piece, Offertoire in G (Wely); and concluding voluntary, March from *Athalie* (Mendelssohn). In the evening he played, opening voluntary, "Angels ever bright and fair" (Handel); and concluding voluntary, Fugue in G minor (Bach). On the Tuesday evening following, May 18th, the sacred cantata *Esther, the Beautiful Queen* (W. H. Bradbury), was exceedingly well rendered, the performance being much appreciated by the large audience which filled the whole of the huge building. Mr. Wm. Hopkirk conducted, while Mr. Maughan Barnett again presided at the organ. On Saturday afternoon, May 15th, Mr. W. A. Reid, A.M.T.C.L. (organist of St. Luke's), gave a private organ recital in St. John's Presbyterian Church, when he played the following programme: Andante—At Evening (D. Buck), Offertoire on Christmas Themes (Guilmant), Processional March (Guilmant), Andante con moto (Dr. Garratt), Improvisation to display the new vox humana and tremulant (W. A. Reid), Symphony No. III. (C. M. Widor), March from *Elu* (Costa), St. Ann Fugue (Bach).

Correspondence.

THE N.C.U. CHORAL COMPETITIONS.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Is it not possible for the Committee of the N.C.U. to inaugurate choral competitions for Nonconformist Choir Unions? As there were no entries for the small choir competitions this year, it seems as if competitions were more popular amongst the larger bodies of singers. There are now a good many Unions in various parts of the country, and I believe if a prize was offered many of them would enter. Perhaps this might take the place of the small choir competition. I should suggest that the matter of numbers be an

open question, so that every choir union—whether large or small—could enter. I am convinced this would prove a useful as well as an attractive feature of the operations of the Union.—Yours, etc.

CHORALIST.

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"THE fact that I am a good musician," said the lady from a country village, "was the means of saving my life during the flood in our town a few years ago."

"How was that?" asked the young lady who sang. "When the water struck our house my husband got on the folding bed and floated down the stream until he was rescued."

"And what did you do?"
"Well, I accompanied him upon the piano."





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Intermezzo. James Lyon.
Finale Fugato. O. A. Mansfield, Mus. Doc. (*Prize Composition*).
January, 1896, contains—
Andantino (Priere). James Lyon.
Caprice. Walter Porter, F.R.C.O.

March, 1896, contains—

Introductory Voluntary. Thos. Ely, Mus. Bac.
"Hollingside," with Variations. Ernest H. Smith, F.R.C.O.

May, 1896, contains—

Introduction and Allegro. Ernest H. Smith, F.R.C.O.
Nocturne. H. S. Irons.

July, 1896, contains—

A Fragment. Arthur Berridge.
Priere. Ernest H. Smith, F.R.C.O.
Concluding Voluntary. James Lyon.

September, 1896, contains

Introduction, Variations and Finale on "Hanover" James Lyon.
Communion. Bruce Steane.

November, 1896, contains—

Marche Nuptiale. Ernest W. Barnard.
In Memoriam. James Lyon.

January, 1897, contains—

Andantino. Arthur Berridge.
Communion. Thomas Greenhalgh.

March, 1897, contains—

March Pomposo. Arthur Berridge.
Prayer. Bruce Steane.

May, 1897, contains—

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July, 1897, contains—

Andante. K. C. Smith.
Marche Jubilante. Bruce Steane.

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"Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bow-wow-wound."

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